

specting the adult. Boca del Toro must certainly be attached to the Costa-Rican or Veraguan fauna, and not to that of New Granada proper. It is more than probable that it appertains to the former; the latter, from recent research, appears to derive most of its forms which differ from those of the Southern Continent from Costa Rica, this doubtless amongst the rest.

I still hope to obtain further information respecting the habits of this most singular bird, as our collector, Enrique Arcé, is now exploring forests known to be frequented by it.

IX.—*Description of a new Species of Long-tailed Titmouse from Asia Minor.* By DR. ALBERT GÜNTHER, F.Z.S., &c.

(Plate IV.)

I HAVE lately received, from the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, a male and female of a Long-tailed Titmouse, which differs so much in coloration from the common European and Japanese kinds that it appears to be entitled to the rank of specific distinction. I therefore designate it

ORITES TEPHRONOTUS. Upper surface of the head and neck light brownish olive along the middle, with a broad black band on each side, commencing almost from the root of the bill, and tapering in front and behind; cheeks and sides of the neck light brownish grey, with rather indistinct blackish longitudinal stripes; chin pure white; throat with a large rounded blackish spot, each of the blackish feathers being white at the end. *Back pure grey, without any black*; uropygium with a rosy tinge. Under surface of the body greyish white, with obscure brownish longitudinal stripes; under tail-coverts with a rosy tinge. Primaries and their coverts black; tertials and their coverts with a narrow whitish outer edge. Tail graduated and coloured as in *O. caudatus*. Bill and feet black. Iris of a light brownish-red colour, with an outer bluish-white ring.

Total length $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches; length of the tail $3\frac{1}{6}$ inches; length of wing, measured from the carpal joint, $2\frac{5}{10}$ inches; length of bill, measured from the front, $2\frac{1}{2}$ lines.

Both specimens were received by me from Dr. Royland, of

Pera, having been obtained in the month of December, by Mr. Thomas Robson, near the village of Havancore, where the species is common in wooded districts; it does not differ from the European species in its habits. *Parus major*, *P. palustris*, *P. ater*, and *P. cæruleus* inhabit the same localities, without perceptible difference from the European birds.

The generic name of *Orites* was established by Möhring, in his work entitled 'Avium Genera' (Auricæ, 1752, 8vo), and was afterwards adopted by Mr. G. R. Gray. The opinion that all genera, even those which have been properly named and well characterized by authors writing before the years of publication of the 10th or 12th edition of Linné's 'Systema Naturæ,' should be ignored and indiscriminately cancelled, appears to me to involve an act of great injustice towards the contemporaries of Linnæus. The idea of *genera* had been formed *before* Linnæus; and although he attached a definite value to genera, and gave them a systematic character by means of exact definitions, he has to share this merit with others. No one will deny that the foundation of our ichthyological system had been laid by Artedi, whose 'Genera Piscium' had been finished before the year 1735, but, owing to the premature death of the author, were not published before 1738, and passed into the 'Systema Naturæ,' without receiving a *systematic* character beyond that which had been given in the previous work.

In the same way Möhring's little work appears to me to be fully entitled to recognition on the part of ornithologists; and the names proposed by him ought to be used, at least in such cases as the present, where the generally adopted nomenclature can be altered without material inconvenience or any risk of confusion. One feels surprised to find at so early a period of zoological science such a systematic dexterity as is displayed by that author; and as regards the systematic character of his genera, they are at least as exactly defined by name, as well as by diagnosis, as those of the 'Systema Naturæ.' Thus, for instance, *Parus* and *Orites*, two genera of his "*ordo Passeres*," are characterized in the following terms (p. 45):—

"*Parus*, Linn. *Rostrum* subulatum, rectum, superficie versus apicem parum descendente. *Nares* plumis frontalibus

tectæ. *Margo* narium annularis, prominulus. *Lingua* apex truncatus, setis laceris. *Rectrices* caudæ fere æquales. *Digitus* cum ungue posticus antico medio cum ungue brevior.

“*Orites* (*Parus caudatus*, auct.). *Rostrum* subulatum, subrectum, apice incurvo. *Nares* plumis frontalibus largissime tectæ; *margo* narium planus, vix prominulus. *Lingua* apex bifidus, segmentis laceris. *Rectrices* interiores gradatim multo longiores. *Digitus* cum ungue posticus antico medio cum ungue æqualis, vel vix brevior.”

What can be more exact, more in the Linnean spirit, than the diagnoses of these two genera? And to reinstate the name of *Orites* is the more justifiable, because the usually adopted one of *Mecistura*, Leach, must give way to that of *Acredula*, Koch. For these last two generic names were published in 1816; but whilst the former is used only in a list of indigenous birds in the British Museum, without any characters, that of the last-mentioned author is accompanied by a very elaborate diagnosis (see Koch, ‘System der baier. Zool.’ p. 199).

. As we do not now wish to admit into the pages of the ‘Ibis’ a discussion on the arid topic of Zoological Nomenclature (that subject being under the consideration of a Committee specially appointed by the British Association), we think it expedient here to mention, we cannot at all agree to the opinion expressed above by our good friend Dr. Günther. To us it seems only becoming that the Rules recommended by the former Committee on Nomenclature should be observed—at least so long as they remain unaltered by the present Committee. These Rules forbid us “to carry back the principle of priority beyond the date of the 12th edition of the ‘Systema Naturæ’”*, i. e. 1766. All Möhring’s genera are thereby excluded. If, as Dr. Günther suggests, some of them should be admitted and others not, there will always be a difficulty as to where the line should be drawn. For

* We are not aware that the fact has been noticed by any writer on nomenclature, but the exception made by the Association Rules in favour of Brisson’s genera virtually amounts to no exception at all. The third edition of his work was published in 1788; and being thus subsequent to the appearance of Linnæus’s twelfth edition, the genera defined in it can stand of their own right from that date, under the exact words of the rule.

instance, in the present case of *Orites*, it might be plausibly urged that the entirely different application of the term by Keyserling and Blasius would cause "material inconvenience" and "risk of confusion." But the inconvenience and confusion in ornithology that would arise from the adoption of all Möhring's generic names can hardly be exaggerated; and we think we have every reason to thank the framers of the British Association Rules for their consideration to naturalists of the present day by disallowing the names of Möhring and other writers prior to 1766. The practical advantage of justice to the living is infinitely preferable to the sentimental dread of injustice to the dead.—ED.

X.—*Recent Ornithological Publications.*

I. ENGLISH.

DR. JERDON has completed his great work on the 'Birds of India'*, by the publication of the Second part of his Second volume, or, as he now terms it, his Third volume. We have accordingly to tender him our most hearty thanks for the admirable manual thus placed at our disposal. The dawn of Indian ornithology has been long in breaking; we may now say safely that the sun has fairly risen, and, in the broad light shed by Dr. Jerdon's work, students and observers in India will have most abundant facilities of continuing their labours. We shall not presume to make any critical remarks on the volume before us; for we hope shortly to have it in our power to present our readers with a Commentary on the whole work from a pen entitled to write on the subject with no brief authority.

The Fifth and Sixth parts of Mr. Gould's magnificent 'Birds of Great Britain' have made their appearance. In spite of its high price, this work seems likely to become a most popular one on the subject. The contents of these two parts are as follows:—

* The Birds of India: &c. By T. C. Jerdon, Surgeon-Major. In three volumes. Vol. III. Calcutta (G. Wyman and Co.): 1864. (London, Smith and Elder.)



J. Wolf del et lith.

M & N. Hanhart imp

OPITES TEPHRONOTUS.